

December 28, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Floreen, Council President  
County Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Floreen and Councilmembers:

I am writing in follow-up to my letter of October 8, 2009 in response to your September 3, 2009 request that our Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PTSAC) review the five options for safe pedestrian access to the Medical Center Station, as evaluated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and related to ongoing expansion of the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC). Following receipt of the Council's request, PTSAC learned of a sixth option being evaluated by the County, the "multi-modal tunnel." In my October 8, 2009 letter, I advised that our subcommittee would be receiving a briefing from Montgomery County's Department of Transportation (MCDOT) regarding this option and that, following that briefing, the subcommittee would make its recommendation for consideration by the full PTSAC at our next monthly meeting, held on November 5, 2009. I advised that, following the full Committee meeting, we would be in a position to formally provide you with our Committee's position on the six options being considered for improved access to the Medical Center Station.

The level of detail for each of the proposed options within the WMATA study is sufficient to respond to your charge to review the options for crossings at Medical Center station in terms of pedestrian safety and access. These details include street level plans, sections and cost analysis for each option. Similar details have yet to be prepared for the sixth, MCDOT/Clark Construction option (aka 'multi-modal tunnel'). Although the multi-modal tunnel appears to have significant merit, we are unable to effectively evaluate it at the present time due to this lack of comparable detail.

Two primary concerns regarding the Medical Center station are of note when considering improvements to pedestrian access and safety at the site. First is the treatment of arriving Metrorail passengers, and second is treatment for other pedestrians arriving by shuttle, bus or on foot. Any successful solution should consider these two pedestrian groups.

Factors integrated into our analysis of crossing options were:

- Length of travel path from Metrorail exit
- Provision of adequate time for MD 355 crossing
- Ease of use by patients with wheelchairs, crutches, etc.
- Reduction in conflicts with other modes (i.e. vehicles)
- Enhanced safety for Kiss and Ride patrons
- Enhanced safety for shuttle bus riders
- Improved resident pedestrian access to Metrorail station

At present, WMATA Alternative #1 (No Build with Improved At-Grade Crossing) does not appear to be a viable option for several reasons including continued conflicts with vehicles at the Metro station site. We also feel that the pedestrian bridge option (WMATA Alternative #5: Pedestrian Bridge Over Rockville Pike) is also not a viable option, largely due its added crossing length, negative visual impact and complexity of stairs/elevators. A matrix with our decision factors is attached for your consideration.

Thank you for your invitation to be involved in this discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Erwin Mack", with a stylized, flowing script.

Erwin Mack  
Chairman

cc: Councilmember Berliner

Councilmember Elrich

Councilmember Ervin

Councilmember Navarro

Councilmember Trachtenberg

Isiah Leggett, County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Director, MCDOT Tom Pogue, MCDOT

Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator, MCDOT

Jack Strausman, Chair Sub-committee

PTSAC Committee

## Pedestrian Safety and Access Ranking of Proposed MD 355 Crossing Options at Medical Center Metrorail Station

Proposed PTSAC Ranking Matrix

| Pedestrian Access and Safety Considerations             | WMATA Study Options        |                             |                           |  |                   | MCDOT/ Clark Construction |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------|
|   | Improved At Grade Crossing | East Side Elevator Entrance | Shallow Pedestrian Tunnel | Shallow Ped. Tunnel with East Side Elevators | Pedestrian Bridge | Multimodal Tunnel         |
| Length of Travel Path From Metro                        | 2                          | 3                           | 1                         | 3  | 1                 | ?                         |
| Provides Adequate Time for MD 355 Crossing              | 2                          | 3                           | 3                         | 3  | 3                 | 3                         |
| Ease of Use by Patients (Wheelchairs, Crutches, etc.)   | 2                          | 3                           | 1                         | 3  | 1                 | ?                         |
| Reduce Conflicts with Other Modes                       | 1                          | 3                           | 3                         | 3  | 3                 | ?                         |
| Enhance Safety for Kiss and Ride Patrons                | 1                          | 3                           | 3                         | 3  | 3                 | ?                         |
| Enhance Safety for Shuttle Bus Riders                   | 2                          | 1                           | 3                         | 3  | 3                 | 2                         |
| Improve Resident Pedestrian Access to Metrorail Station | 1                          | 2                           | 2                         | 3  | 3                 | ?                         |
| <b>Calculated Rank</b>                                  | <b>11</b>                  | <b>18</b>                   | <b>16</b>                 | <b>21</b>                                    | <b>17</b>         | <b>5+</b>                 |

Ranking: 1 = low, 2 = medium/moderate, 3 = high

| Other (non ped. Specific) considerations                                       | Shallow Ped.               |                             |                           |  |                   |                   |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
|  | Improved At Grade Crossing | East Side Elevator Entrance | Shallow Pedestrian Tunnel | Shallow Ped. Tunnel with East Side Elevators | Pedestrian Bridge | Multimodal Tunnel |
| Bicycle Accomodation   | Fair                       | Fair                        | Moderate                  | Moderate                                     | Moderate          | Fair?             |
| Cost   | Low                        | Moderate                    | Moderate                  | High   | Low               | Moderate          |
| Improve Time to Clear Platform   | No                         | Yes                         | No                        | Yes  | No                | No                |
| Shuttle Bus Accomodation   | No                         | No                          | No                        | No   | No                | Yes               |
| Kiss and Ride Enhancement  | No                         | Yes                         | Yes                       | Yes  | Yes               | ?                 |
| Improve Vehicular Performace of Intersection (MD 355/South Dr./South Wood Rd.) | No                         | Yes                         | Yes                       | Yes  | Yes               | Yes               |